REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicants originally submitted Claims 1-26 in the application. In response to an election requirement, the Applicants provisionally selected Claims 1-7 without traverse and withdrew Claims 8-26. The Applicants also amended Claims 1-3 in previous responses.

In the present preliminary amendment, the Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 and canceled dependent Claim 3 without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amendment can be found in Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 7 and 22 of the original specification. No other claims have been amended, canceled or added. Accordingly, Claims 1-2 and 4-7 are currently pending in the application.

I. Comment on Previous Rejections of Claims 1-2 and 4-7

Previously, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-2 and 4-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,124,716 to Kanamori or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanamori in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,728,616 to Cheek, *et al.* Neither Kanamori nor Cheek, however, individually or in combination, teach or suggest a centralized connector module including a dielectric body having interconnected terminal sets corresponding to components connectable thereacross and configured to provide a common terminating point for said components during normal operation thereof as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Kanamori discloses an electrical junction block 10 having a pair of ports to receive a wiring harness connector 18 and a test unit connector 20. (*See* column 2, line 66 to column 3, line 3.) The test unit connector 20 includes a body 34 from which a plurality of terminal pins 36 extends. The

terminal pins 36 are electrically connected to wires 38 extending to a test unit 26. (*See* column 3, lines 33-35.)

The terminal pins 36, however, are not interconnected terminal sets corresponding to components connectable thereacross and configured to provide a common terminating point for the components during normal operation thereof. On the contrary, electrical devices 24 connected to the wiring harness 18 are terminated at the wiring harness 18. (*See* column 3, lines 3-5.) Instead of a terminal set, the terminal pins 36 are individual protrusions that provide a connection between a test unit 26 and electrical devices 24 that are operatively connected to the junction block 10 via the wiring harness connector 18. (*See* column 3, lines 48-61; column 4, lines 11-16 and Figures 1-2.) Accordingly, the terminal pins 36 do not provide a common termination point for devices during operation of the devices. As such, the terminal pins 36 do not teach interconnected terminal sets corresponding to components connectable thereacross and configured to provide a common terminating point for the components during normal operation thereof as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Additionally, Kanamori does not suggest each element of amended independent Claim 1 since Kanamori discloses a wiring harness connector 18 that is used to terminate electrical devices but does not include continuity indicator circuits. Instead, as discussed above, Kanamori teaches the continuity checking is performed by the tester, not circuits within the wiring harness connector 18. Accordingly, Kanamori neither teaches nor suggests each element of amended independent Claim 1.

Furthermore, the Applicants do not find any other teachings in Kanamori that disclose a centralized connector module including: (1) a dielectric body having interconnected terminal sets corresponding to components connectable thereacross and configured to provide a common terminating point for the components during normal operation thereof and (2) continuity indicator circuits associated with at least some of the terminal sets and configured to indicate continuity faults with respect to connected ones of the components as recited in amended independent Claim 1. Instead, Kanamori teaches one body (wiring harness connector 18) that provides a termination for electrical devices and a **separate** tester (test unit 26) that checks electrical continuity for the electrical devices. (*See* column 4, lines 11-16 and Figure 1.)

Cheek does not cure the deficiencies of Kanamori since Cheek teaches an apparatus for testing the continuity and erroneous connections of a plurality of wired connections. (*See* column 1, lines 30-32.) Thus, instead of disclosing a central connector module including continuity circuits, Cheek teaches a **separate** device that is used to check continuity of circuits. Cheek, therefore, does not cure the deficiencies of Kanamori.

As such, neither Kanamori nor Cheek teach or suggest each and every element of amended independent Claim 1 and Claims dependent thereon. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections of Claims 1-2 and 4-7 and allow issuance thereof.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, the Applicants now see all of the Claims currently pending in this application to be in condition for allowance and therefore earnestly solicit a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-2 and 4-7.

The Applicants request the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney of record at (972) 480-8800 if such would further or expedite the prosecution of the present application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees, credits or overpayments to Deposit Account 08-2395.

Respectfully submitted,

HITT GAINES, PC

J. Joel Justiss
Registration No. 48,981

Dated: 2/1/06
P.O. Box 832570
Richardson, Texas 75083
(972) 480-8800